

# PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND THE TEACHER

Mr. Dori Lal Chaudhary\*

Dr. Ali Mohammad\*\*

## ABSTRACT

Like the legal eagles and medicos, lakhs of school teachers should also be bound by a stringent code of ethics in a bid to instill professionalism among them. Teaching creates all other professions. A Teacher is said to be a candle that burns itself to light up the life of others; they should develop appropriate ethics among themselves so that the same values can be developed among students. While a great majority of teachers carry with their heads high this noble tradition and even innovate and teach beyond the classroom setting, Other teachers have lost the passion to impart knowledge and are simply going through the motions of teaching, for the sake of fulfilling an obligation. Now, teaching profession can also be riddled with corruption. The present paper throws the light on the needs, principles, challenges and constraints in the implementation of Professional Ethics in teachers.

*Teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp never lights another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame. The teacher who has come to an end of his subject, who has no living traffic with his knowledge merely repeats his lesson to his students can only load to their mind. The greater part of our learning in the school has been a waste because most of our teachers think their subjects are like dead specimens of once living things with which they have a learned acquaintance but no communication of life and love - **Rabindra Nath Tagore***

It is universally felt that like all other professions, the teaching profession should also have its own Code of Professional Ethics which indeed is a prerequisite to ensure its dignity and integrity. It is also significant that the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 entrusts teachers with some onerous professional responsibilities to be internalized by them in the performance of their duties. Accordingly, it is considered necessary that the Code of Professional Ethics be evolved and adopted by the teaching community.

A four-member committee of the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) has mooted a mechanism for registration of persons eligible for teaching in schools. Freshly-appointed teachers will be administered an oath to observe a 23-point code of professional ethics to enhance the dignity of their profession.

The committee constituted by the NCTE reviewed this code keeping in view the context of the relevant sections of the Right of children to Free and Compulsory education (RTE) Act 2009 and

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\*Asst. Prof. TT&NFE (IASE) Faculty of Edu., Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi-25

\*\*Asso. Prof. TT&NFE (IASE) Faculty of Edu., Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi-25

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also examined the code professional ethics currently in use in some countries.

23- point Code of Professional Ethics constituted by committee under Following Heads:-

1. Obligation towards students- 10 Points (1.1 to 1.10)
2. Obligation towards Parents, Community and Society – 4 Points (2.1 to 2.4)
3. Obligation towards the Professional and Colleagues – 9 Points (3.1 to 3.9)

### **Why ethics for a noble profession- Teaching**

1. Great impact in the molding of the next generation
2. Teacher works as a Friend, Philosopher and Guide
3. Imbalance between past, present and future
4. To enjoy respect and status in the society
5. To commensurate ethical and cultural values in India
6. Perplexed with new development and cultural heritage
7. It's no longer a service but an occupation with unclear roles vision and mission
8. Paradigm shift in the perception of teachers
9. Erosion in the values , responsibilities, commitment in this profession
10. Rewarding opportunities in other sectors

Always teaching has been a noble profession in our society. It has the potential to have a great impact in the molding of the next generation and a teacher works as a Friend, Philosopher and Guide in this process. That is why Professional Ethics should be valued for teachers.

While a great majority of teachers carry with their heads high this noble tradition and even innovate and teach beyond the classroom setting, a teaching profession can also be riddled with corruption. We have heard of teachers who sought material or sexual favor/s from students and parents in exchange for a higher academic rating. Other teachers have lost the passion to impart knowledge and are simply going through the motions of teaching, for the sake of fulfilling an obligation. It is needed also due to following reasons:-

1. India is in a state of transformation
2. Facing lots of challenges both from the society and individual needs
3. Perplexed with new development and cultural heritage
4. Imbalance between past, present and future
5. Result- Teacher no longer enjoys the same respect and status in the society
6. Development is not commensurate with ethical and cultural values inherent in India

### **Shifts in Paradigm**

1. Teaching is now a profession rather than a passion and thus there is a paradigm shift in the

perception of teachers

2. There is erosion in the values , responsibilities, commitment in this profession
3. Availability of varied and financially rewarding opportunities in other sectors has affected teaching profoundly
4. Changing demand and supply ratio in this sector has undermined its importance as a noble profession
5. Commercialization and profit making is the buzz word
6. It's no longer a service but an occupation with unclear roles vision and mission

### **Redefining Teachers' Professionalism**

1. The one and only thing that is constant in teaching is the change.
2. Changing students, changing society, societal norms and believing in new innovations
3. Diverse roles and responsibilities of educational institutions
4. Teachers autonomy along with new and diverse moral responsibilities and values
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6. Diverse roles and responsibilities of educational institutions
7. Teachers autonomy along with new and diverse moral responsibilities and values

### **PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

#### **1. Teacher as a Guide**

- Deal justly and impartially with students regardless of their physical, mental, emotional, political, economic, or religious characteristics
- Recognize the differences among students and seek to meet their individual needs
- Encourage students to formulate and work for high individual goals in the development of their physical, intellectual, creative, and spiritual endowments
- Aid students to develop an understanding and appreciation not only of the opportunities and benefits of democracy but also of their obligations to it
- Respect the right of every student to have confidential information about himself withheld except when its release is to authorized agencies or as required by law
- Accept no remuneration for tutoring except in accordance with approved policies of the governing board

#### **2. Having Co-operative Relationships**

- Respect the basic responsibility of the parents for their children.
- Seek to establish friendly and cooperative relationships with the home
- Help to increase the student's confidence in his own home and avoid disparaging remarks which might undermine that confidence
- Provide parents with the information that will serve the best interest of their children, and be discreet with information received from parents
- Keep parents informed about the progress of their children as interpreted in terms of the purpose of the school

#### **3. Having Good Inter-personal Skills**

- Adhere to any reasonable pattern of behavior accepted by the community for professional persons.

- Discuss controversial issues from an objective point of view, thereby keeping his class free from partisan opinions.
- Perform the duties of citizenship, and participate in community activities with due consideration for his obligation to his students, his family and himself.
- Recognize that the schools belong to the people of the community, encourage lay participation in shaping the purposes of the school, and strive to keep the public informed of the educational programme which is being provided.
- Respect the community in which he is employed and be loyal to the school system, community, state and nation.
- Work to improve education in the community and to strengthen the community's moral, spiritual, and intellectual life.

#### **4. Having obligations with respect to Employment**

- Conduct professional Ethics through the proper channels
- Refrain from discussing confidential and official information with unauthorized persons
- Apply for employment on the basis of competence only, and avoid asking for a specific position known to be filled by another teacher
- Seek employment in a professional manner, avoiding such practices as the indiscriminate distribution of applications
- Refuse to accept a position when the vacancy has been created through unprofessional activity or pending over professional policy or the application of unjust personnel practices and procedures
- Adhere to the conditions of a contract until service there under has been performed, the contract has been terminated by mutual consent, or the contract has otherwise been legally terminated
- Give an expect due notice before a change of position is to be made
- Be fair in all recommendations that are given concerning the work of other teachers
- Accept no compensation from procedures of instructional supplies when one's recommendations affect the local purchase or use of such teaching aids
- Engage in no gainful employment, outside of his contract, where the employment affects adversely his professional status or impairs his standing with students, associates, and the community
- Cooperate in the development of school policies and assume one's professional obligations thereby incurred
- Accept one's obligation to the employer's for maintaining professional level of service

#### **5. Maintaining Quality Professional Relationships**

- Deal with other members of the profession in the same manner as he himself wishes to be treated
- Stand by other teachers who have acted on his behalf and at his respect
- Speak constructively of other teachers, but report honestly to responsible persons in matters involving the welfare of students, the school system, and the profession
- Maintain active membership in professional organizations and through participation; strive to attain the objectives that justify such organized groups

- Seek to make professional growth by such procedures as study, research, travel conferences, and attendance at professional meetings
- Make the teaching profession so attractive in ideals and practices that sincere and able young people will want to enter

#### **6. Having Obligations towards Students**

- Treats all students with love and affection.
- just and impartial to all students
- Helps Students' in Physical, Social, Intellectual, Emotional, and Moral Development.
- Respects basic human dignity of the child
- Systematic efforts to actualize students potential and talent.
- Transacts the curriculum in conformity with the values enshrined in the Constitution of India.
- Adapts his/her teaching to the individual needs of students.
- Maintains the secrets of the information concerning students
- Teacher as a role model.

#### **7. Having Obligations towards the Profession and Colleagues**

- Continuous effort for professional development.
- Creates a culture that encourages purposeful collaboration and dialogue among colleagues and stakeholders.
- Takes pride in the teaching profession and treats other members of the profession with respect and dignity.
- Refrains from engaging in private teaching activity.
- Refrains from accepting any gift, or favour that might appear to influence professional decisions or actions.
- Refrains from making untested allegations against colleagues or higher authorities.
- Avoids making unpleasant statements about colleagues, especially in the presence of Students, other teachers, officials or parents.
- Respects the professional standing and opinions of his/her colleagues.

#### **8. Having Obligations towards Parents, Community and Society**

- Establishes trust with parents/guardians in the interest of all round development of students.
- Resists from doing anything which is harmful for child or his/her parents/ guardians.
- Develop respect for the composite culture of India among students.
- Keeps the country uppermost in mind
- Avoid taking part in such activities as may spread feelings of hatred among different communities, religious or linguistic groups.

### **Challenges and Constraints in the Implementation of Professional Ethics in Teaching**

1. Can ethics training/ education be self paced or does it require facilitation and/ or team learning?
2. If the workplace is the focus of ethics training how does the employer ensure consistency in approach to ethics training?

3. Is ethics training a process of learning the prevailing (and system sanctioned) codes of behavior? How can the requirement for ethics training be reconciled with best practice in professional learning?
4. Is ethics training more effective following periods of experience in the workplace? e.g. extended practicum or internship?
5. Is it possible to train people in ethical conduct?
6. Is the use of case studies an effective strategy in ethics training
7. Should ethics training be delivered as part of pre-service training rather than during the induction phase?

## **Conclusion**

Teaching creates all other professions. A Teacher is said to be a candle that burns itself to light up the life of others; they should develop appropriate ethics among themselves so that the same values can be developed among students. Teachers are not only guides and guardians in schools but also second parents. We also want to revitalize the image of and respect for teaching as a vocation by increasing public awareness on the value of teachers in society and in national development and to use the occasion to call on everyone to contribute in making teaching as an attractive profession and in giving teachers the needed support and assistance.

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